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PROCEEDINGS
RELATIVE TO THE
ULSTER ASSEMBLY
OF
VOLUNTEER DELEGATES:

ON THE SUBJECT OF
A MORE EQUAL REPRESENTATION
OF THE PEOPLE

In the PARLIAMENT of IRELAND.

TO WHICH ARE ANNEXED,

LETTERS *from the Duke of Rich-*
mond, Dr. Price, Mr. Wyville,
and OTHERS.

PUBLISHED BY THE COMMITTEE OF
CORRESPONDENCE.

B E L F A S T :

PRINTED BY HENRY AND ROBERT JOY AND CO.
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B. E. L. F. A. S. P.

PRINTED BY HENRY AND ROBERT JOY AND CO.

1841.



A

More Equal Representation of the People in the PARLIAMENT of IRELAND.

AT a meeting of delegates from forty-five companies of the Province of Ulster, assembled at Lisburn the 1st of July, 1783, in pursuance of a public requisition of the Ulster regiment, viz. Southern battalion of 1st Ulster regiment; first independent county Down regiment; the Union regiment; Ulster regiment; Belfast first volunteer company; and Belfast volunteer company.

Lieut. Col. SHARMAN in the Chair.

Resolved unanimously, That a general meeting of the volunteer delegates of the province of Ulster, on the subject of **A MORE EQUAL REPRESENTATION OF THE PEOPLE IN PARLIAMENT**, is hereby earnestly entreated; to be held at DUNGANNON, on Monday, the *eighth day of September next*.

Resolved unanimously, That the following gentlemen (seven to be a quorum) be appointed a committee of correspondence for communicating with the other corps of the province, for taking preparatory steps to forward the intentions of this meeting, and

for collecting the best authorities and information on the subject of a parliamentary reform, viz.

Lieut. Col. Sharman,	Col. Rowley,
Capt. Black,	Major John Crawford,
Dr. Alex. Crawford,	Lieut. Col. Banks,
Major Burden,	Mr. Robert Thompson,
Capt. Wad, Cunningham,	Capt. Thos. Prentice,
Revd. Mr. Craig,	Lieut. Tomb,
Dr. Samuel Moore,	

Resolved unanimously, That the following address be published in the public prints :

To the VOLUNTEER ARMY of the PRO-
VINCE of ULSTER.

FELLOW CITIZENS,

IN common with every class of Irishmen, you are sensible that this kingdom for many centuries, might have continued to bear its chains in ignoble and indigent obscurity, had not an army of its citizens, by a great effort, dared to cast them off.

THAT the dignified conduct of that army lately restored to the Imperial crown of Ireland its original splendor, to nobility its ancient privileges, and to the nation at large its inherent rights as a sovereign independent state ;—that by inculcating the glorious spirit of toleration, it has united the once distracted inhabitants of this country into an indissoluble mass ; and promoted the most exalted reverence for the laws,—are facts that will exhibit a splendid and interesting figure in the annals of the age.

FROM a military institution, so singular in its nature

ture as to comprehend the several gradations of nobles, commoners, merchants, yeomen and mechanics; every substantial good will be expected by wise and virtuous men.

THEY will with honest pride, behold in the state an unparalleled combination of the military with the civil character, existing only for the general interests of the community; and prepared, on the purest principles of the constitution, to give efficacy to the wishes of Three Millions of People,

THE idea of a well-digested parliamentary reform, has ever experienced a favourable reception in the uncorrupted breasts of Irishmen and of Britons.—It has been uniformly looked up to as the true source of public virtue and of political salvation, by the first characters these kingdoms have produced. In this age, we have seen it warmly supported by that consummate statesman the late earl of CHATHAM; and revived by the heir to his abilities and name, the present WILLIAM PITT. It has received the sanction of the most eminent and honest men in both houses of the British parliament; of a great number of the most respectable shires in England; of the volunteer delegates of the province of Munster; and, within these few days, of the unanimous vote of thirty-eight corps, reviewed at Belfast.

AMONG the many glorious effects of which a more equal representation of the people in parliament would be productive, the following are obvious:—The destruction of that party-spirit whose baneful influence has at all times been injurious to the public weal;—a revival of the native dignity of the crown, by imparting to each branch of the legislature its distinct

effect and proportional weight ;—and the abolition of that train of courtly mercenaries who must ever continue to prey on the vitals of public virtue, till, the balance of the constitution being restored, the necessity for governing by regular systems of seduction, shall no longer exist.

THEN, would the constituent body regain its constitutional controul over its trustees,—and venal majorities would not be found to support the most dishonourable and pernicious measures, in opposition to the sense of the unpolluted part of the legislature, as well as contrary to the universal wishes of the public—and to the true intent of the institution of parliaments.

WITH due deference for the august body which we have presumed to address—we therefore beg leave to express our wishes that the volunteer delegates of Ulster would assemble with the same spirit of loyalty, patriotism, and firmness which actuated them on the memorable 15th February, 1782 :—to deliberate on the most constitutional means of procuring A MORE EQUAL REPRESENTATION OF THE PEOPLE IN THE PARLIAMENT OF IRELAND—as *the only measure* which can give permanency to the late renovation of our constitution, or restore that virtue to the representative body without which, though the mere forms of a free government may be preserved, its spirit must inevitably perish.

Signed by order of the meeting,

WM. SHARMAN, } Chairman.

LIEUT.

LIEUT. Col. Sharman having left the chair, and
Lieut. Col. Sir Walter Synnot taken it:

RESOLVED, That the thanks of this meeting be given
to our worthy chairman, for his very proper conduct
in the chair.

HENRY JOY, JUNIOR. } Secretary.

TO THE
DUNGANNON DELEGATES.
THE REPORT of a COMMITTEE of
CORRESPONDENCE, appointed by forty-five
Corps assembled by public Advertisement at
Lisbourn on the first July last, for the Purpose
of obtaining Information on the important
Subject of a more Equal Representation of the
People, in the Parliament of IRELAND.

THE Committee in discharge of the trust invested
in them, immediately opened a correspondence
with a number of the most eminent and well-informed
characters in Great-Britain and Ireland, and re-
ceived answers fraught with most valuable informa-
tion on the subject.

Such of them as enter minutely into the business
will be submitted to the Provincial Assembly if
thought eligible, considering the length of their de-
tail

tail ; and the great delay which their disclosure will unavoidably occasion. If it be more agreeable to the Meeting, for the general diffusal of a Body of Knowledge on so great a political subject, the principal letters will be published by the Committee's Secretary ;—by which means the dispatch necessary to so great an Assembly will be promoted.

THE YORKSHIRE ASSOCIATION, so celebrated for its spirit and numbers, meet about the close of the present month ; in order previously to receive the decisions of this Province.

THE SOCIETY FOR CONSTITUTIONAL KNOWLEDGE, in London, in which are enrolled the names of the first characters in England, (strenuous labourers in the glorious business of reform in our sister kingdom)—have ordered the Addresses of the Ulster Regiment, and of the forty-five corps, convening the Provincial Meeting of Ulster, to be entered in their books, published in the prints, and circulated gratis thro' the kingdom, in order that the exertions of Ireland may give a spur to the spirit of the British nation.

THE Committee is rejoiced to observe, that the English letters are full of expressions of a high sense of the wisdom, spirit, and unanimity that have characterized the Volunteer Army of Ireland : and that they all concur in conceiving the present to be the very moment in which a radical parliamentary reform can best be effected. They universally agree in the idea that the Delegates at Dungannon should enter into a very comprehensive view of the matter ; so as the principles of reform may be strongly marked in their resolves :—receiving the sanction and concurrence

currence of a general convention of delegates from the four Provinces—coincidence of sentiment in which, they hold to be *certainly of success*.

FOUNDED on much deliberation, assisted by the best information they could procure, the Committee have ventured to prepare Resolutions, comprehending a general system of ideas on the subject, which they will take the liberty, through their Chairman, Lieut. Col. SHARMAN, with much humility, to move in the august Body of Representatives of the Volunteer Army of Ulster.

THE Committee of Correspondence have now only to apologize for their inability to so weighty a charge:—Happy if their labours shall meet the approbation of their fellow-citizens; or tend in the most remote degree to any valuable purpose. They trust that the spirit of firmness and integrity which has already restored this ancient kingdom to her rank in the nations, will crown the 8th of September 1783, as a day which is to form the ground-work of *internal* emancipation, on a basis as great as that on which our rights as an independent nation, have been with such rapid success already established.

ULSTER VOLUNTEER ASSOCIATION.

AT a meeting of two hundred and seventy-two Companies of the Volunteer Army of the Province of Ulster, by their Delegates, held at Dungannon, on Monday the 8th of September, 1783;

Col. JAMES STEWART, } in the Chair.
of the Tyrone Regiment, }

The following RESOLUTIONS were UNANIMOUSLY entered into :

I. **R**ESOLVED *unanimously*, That freedom is the indefeasible birth-right of Irishmen and Britons, derived from the author of their being ; and of which, no power on earth, much less a delegated power, hath a right to deprive them.

II. RESOLVED *unanimously*, That *they only* are free, who are governed by no laws but those to which they assent, either by themselves in person — or by their representatives freely chosen — subject to the controul — and frequently returning into the common mass of constituents.

III. RESOLVED *unanimously*, That the majority of our house of commons is not chosen by the people, — but returned by THE MANDATE OF PEERS OR COMMONERS ; either for indigent boroughs, where scarcely any inhabitants exist ; or
con-

considerable cities and towns, where the elective franchise is vested in a few : Who are thus suffered to place the highest trusts of society, *against the interest and will of the many*, in the hands of men, who seldom act as if they considered themselves accountable for their conduct to the people.

IV. RESOLVED *unanimously*. That by the ancient constitution of parliaments, elections of representatives were for centuries *annual*, and in many instances more frequent ; — and the exercise of suffrage, among freemen, universal.

V. RESOLVED *unanimously*, That every approach to those fundamental principles, tends to a renovation of, not an innovation in, the constitution.

VI. RESOLVED *unanimously*, That the elective franchise ought, of right, to extend to all those, and those only, who are likely to exercise it, for the public good.

VII. RESOLVED *unanimously*, That the present inadequate representation, and the long duration of parliaments, destroy that balance which, by our constitution, should subsist between the three estates of the legislature ; render the commons' house independent of the people ; — procure certain majorities in favour of every administration ; and threaten either an absolute monarchy, or that still more odious government, a tyrannical aristocracy.

VIII. RESOLVED, THEREFORE,

THAT the present imperfect representation — and the long duration of parliaments — ARE UNCONSTITUTIONAL — and *intolerable* GRIEVANCES.

IX. RESOLVED *unanimously*, That as the voice of the commons of Ireland is no less necessary for every legislative purpose — than that of either the king or lords, — the people have a just and inherent right to correct the abuses of representation ; — whenever such abuses shall have so encreased, as to rob them of their constitutional share in their own government.

X. RESOLVED *unanimously*, That it is the interest of parliament itself to effect a substantial reform ; — as the very existence of that assembly must become precarious when it shall lose the confidence of the people, to whom originally it owed its creation — and from whom alone its powers were derived.

XI. RESOLVED *unanimously*, That we solemnly pledge ourselves to each other and to our country — to seek a speedy and effectual redress of these our grievances, and to co-operate with our fellow-subjects, in every exertion necessary to obtain it.

WE call for the aid of every upright senator ; of every man, whether in Ireland or Great-Britain, who bears or wishes to acquire the title of a freeman !

XII. RESOLVED *unanimously*, That we have attended with admiration to the noble, tho' hitherto ineffectual efforts, of those illustrious characters and virtuous citizens who, in England and Scotland, strenuously labour to procure redress of similar grievances. May the examples of the sister nations, mutually animate the inhabitants of each to persevere with unremitting ardour, until the glorious labour be finally compleated.

XIII. RESOLVED *unanimously*, That a committee (of five persons from each county) be now chosen

chosen (by ballot) to represent this province in a grand national convention, to be held at noon in the Royal Exchange of Dublin, on the tenth day of November next ; to which we trust each of the other PROVINCES will send delegates, — to digest and publish a plan of parliamentary reform — to pursue such measures as may appear to them most likely to render it effectual ; to adjourn from time to time — and convene provincial meetings if found necessary.

THE following gentlemen were accordingly chosen by ballot, viz.

D E L E G A T E S.

ANTRIM.

*Col. O'Neill,
Lieut. Col. Sharman,
Col. Rowley,
Capt. W. Todd Jones,
Col. T. M. Jones.*

ARMAGH.

*Earl of Charlemont,
Lieut. Col. Brownlow,
Sir Capel Molyneaux,
Lieut. Col. Sir Walter
Synott,
Capt. James Dawson.*

CAVAN.

*Lord Farnham,
The Hon. J. J. Maxwell,*

DOWN.

*Col. Robert Stewart,
Capt. Matt. Forde, jun.,
Major Crawford,
Col. Pat. Savage,
Capt. Gavin Hamilton.*

FERMANAGH.

*Col. Irvine,
Col. Sir Arthur Brooke,
Capt. A. C. Hamilton,
Jason Hazard, Esq;
Capt. Jas. Armstrong.*

LONDONDERRY.

*Lord Bishop of Derry,
Col. Right Hon. Thomas
Connolly,*

Capt.

*Capt. Frs. Saunderson,
Col. Geo. Montgomery,
Capt. Henry Clements.*

DONEGALL.

*Col. Alex. Montgomery,
Col. John Hamilton,
Lieut. Col. A. Stewart,
Col. Robt. M^cClintock,
Lieut. Col. Chs. Nesbitt.*

*Col. Rt. Hon. Edward
Carey,
Capt. Leckey,
Capt. Ferguson.*

MONAGHAN.

*Col. Chs. Powell Leslie,
Col. Frs. Lucas,
Col. John Montgomery,
Capt. Wm. Forster,
Col. Jas. Hamilton.*

TYRONE.

*Col. Stewart,
Lieut. Col. Montgomery,
Col. Jas. Alexander,
Lieut. Col. Charleton.
Capt. Eccles,*

XIV. RESOLVED *unanimously*, That it be an instruction to said committee, that the delegates from each county do prepare, and carry with them to the national convention, an account of all the cities, towns, and boroughs in this province; the mode of election in such as at present return members to parliament; as near as may be the proportionate number of Protestant and Roman Catholic inhabitants in each; and a conjecture of their comparative properties.

XV. RESOLVED *unanimously*, That we are decided in opinion that the representatives of the people ought not in future to consent to ANY BILL OF SUPPLY for a longer term than TWELVE MONTHS: nor more than SIX MONTHS,

MONTHS, until a complete redress of the aforesaid grievances be obtained.

The following address of the first regiment of **IRISH BRIGADE** to the chairman of this association, on the 15th of Feb. 1782, being read :

*' To Col. WILLIAM IRVINE, Chairman of the
' ULSTER VOLUNTEER DELEGATES as-
' sembled at DUNGANNON, Feb. 15th, 1782,*

' S I R,

*' I AM directed by the first regiment of IRISH
' BRIGADE to acquaint you, that on the twenty-
' second day of last month, at a full meeting of
' that corps, they unanimously adopted the resolu-
' tions of the Ulster delegates assembled at Dun-
' gannon, on Friday the 15th February last.*

*' To that assembly, unprecedented in the an-
' nals of mankind, which is the glory of the pre-
' sent times, and must be the wonder of futurity,
' IRELAND OWES HER EMANCIPATION.*

*' TOLERATION, the offspring of benevolence
' and wisdom, was no sooner adopted by that il-
' lustrious body, than received and cherished
' through the whole nation, and the inhabitants of
' Ireland from a DIVIDED became an UNITED
' PEOPLE.*

*' You Sir, and the highly respectable body of
' which you are chairman, will hear with pleasure
' of every accession of strength to the volunteer
' army: I am happy therefore, to acquaint you,
' that this regiment though but four months em-
' bodied is numerous and respectable; a circum-
' stance*

stance sufficient to convince the world, that the public virtue of this kingdom daily increases, and that the glorious flame of *liberty* blazes through the nation.

‘ AT this GREAT CRISIS, when the Western world, while laying the foundation of a rising empire, temptingly holds out a system of equal liberty to mankind, and waits with open arms to receive the emigrants from surrounding nations ; we think it a duty we owe to our country, to promote, as far as our example can reach, an affectionate coalition of the inhabitants of Ireland. Animated by this sentiment, and convinced that national unanimity is the basis of national strength, this regiment affords a striking instance how far the divine spirit of toleration can unite men of all religious descriptions in one great object, THE SUPPORT OF A FREE CONSTITUTION.’

I have the honor to be, Sir,
with the highest respect,
your faithful and most
obedient servant,

JOHN SUTTON, *President.*

XVI. RESOLVED *unanimously*, That this association entertain the most grateful sense of the approbation of such liberal and patriotic men as compose that respectable body ; that we rejoice in the accession of their abilities to the common cause, and that we will be happy to co-operate with them in effecting the compleat liberty and happiness of the good people of this kingdom.

XVII. Re-

XVII. RESOLVED *unanimously*, That the following address to the volunteer armies of the provinces of Munster, Leinster and Connaught, be printed with these resolutions.

To the VOLUNTEER ARMIES of the
Provinces of MUNSTER, LEINSTER
and CONNAUGHT.

FELLOW SUBJECTS,

THE transcendant events which our united efforts have produced, present an eminent instance of the protecting hand of Heaven ; — whilst the progressive virtue and general union of the people, naturally prompt them to revive the spirit of an unrivalled constitution, and to vindicate the inherent rights of men.

THE most important work yet remains ; — which neglected, our past attainments are transitory, unsubstantial, insecure ! — an extension to thousands of our beloved fellow-citizens of a franchise, comprehending *the very essence* of liberty : — and drawing the line which precisely separates *the free-man from the slave*.

SUFFER us, therefore, to conjure you by every endearing tie that connects man with man — with unceasing zeal to pursue one of the most glorious objects that ever agitated the human mind : — a restoration of virtue to a senate long unaccustomed to speak the voice of the people ; — a renovation of the ancient balance of our government ; and a firm establishment of the first gifts of nature, on the ruins of an avowed corruption, — at once the bane of morals, and of liberty.

C

FROM

FROM A GRAND NATIONAL CONVENTION — distinguished by integrity, and inspired with the courageous spirit of the constitution — every blessing must result.

WITH one voice, then, — *the voice of united millions*, let Ireland assert her claim to freedom !

THRO' her four provincial assemblies let her temperate declarations flow to one common center ; and there, matured into an extensive plan of reform, be produced as the solemn act of THE VOLUNTEER ARMY OF IRELAND : as a demand of rights, robbed of which, the un-animated forms of a free government would be a curse ; and existence itself, cease to be a blessing.

Friends and Countrymen,

THE eyes of an enlightened world, are this instant upon us ! — MUNSTER has, in part, already led the way : and millions of our fellow-subjects of Britain, in whom the flame of liberty still burns with lustre — behold with delight our exertions in the common cause ; and in our success, see the certain harbinger of their own.

LET the reflection that Greece, the seat of liberty and of science ; that Rome, the mistress of the world ; and that innumerable States, once flourishing and free, now lie prostrate by the hand of tyranny — *teach Ireland wisdom*. To our deliberative assemblies they convey awful warning to be *spirited, unanimous, and firm* ; lest the present wretched condition of other countries be soon the fate of our own !

MAY the Supreme Ruler of the Universe crown his other blessings, by being present with us, —
by

by promoting union and the love of our country among all ranks of men ; and by finally directing our exertions — to *virtue, liberty, and peace!*

A specific plan of parliamentary reform, being produced and read by the committee of correspondence :

XVIII. *RESOLVED unanimously*, That said plan be referred to the consideration of the national convention, and that the thanks of this meeting be presented to lieut. col. Sharman and the gentlemen of the committee of correspondence, for their great trouble in collecting information on a parliamentary reform, and for their abilities and zeal in digesting matter for the meeting of this day.

XIX. *RESOLVED unanimously*, That the thanks of this meeting be presented to the lord bishop of Derry, for his attendance and assistance in the business of this day ; for his warm attachment to the volunteer cause ; and for proving himself the steady friend to the liberties of Ireland upon all occasions.

XX. *RESOLVED unanimously*, That the sincere thanks of this meeting be presented to the inhabitants of Dungannon, for their very polite conduct, and to the Dungannon battalion for their vigilant conduct when on guard this day.

XXI. *RESOLVED unanimously*, That we lament that unavoidable business of consequence, prevented our late chairman, colonel William Irvine from attending this meeting, and that the thanks of this meeting be transmitted by our secretary to

colonel William Irvine for his polite letter of excuse, for his non-attendance this day.

JAMES STEWART, } *Chairman.*
col. of the Tyrone regt.

JAMES DAWSON, } *Secretary.*
capt. Orier grenadiers,

COL. JAMES STEWART having left the chair, Col. ROBERT STEWART, of the first independent county of Down regiment was unanimously called thereto, and having taken the chair accordingly ;

XXII. RESOLVED *unanimously*, That the particular thanks of this meeting be presented to Col. J. Stewart, for his very great propriety of conduct in the chair.

RESOLVED *unanimously*, That the thanks of this meeting be presented to our secretary, captain James Dawson, for his very particular attention and ability in the discharge of the duties of his laborious office of secretary to the volunteer association of this province.

ROBERT STEWART, *col. 1st* } *Chairman,*
independent co. Down regt.

At

COMMITTEE'S CIRCULAR LETTER *for* ENGLAND.

At a meeting of the committee of correspondence, appointed by the delegates of forty-five volunteer corps, assembled at Lisburn on the 1st July instant, held at Belfast 19th July, 1783.

Lieut. Col. SHARMAN in the Chair.

ORDERED, That the following circular Letter, signed by the secretary in the name of this committee, be forwarded to inclosing a copy of the resolutions of the provincial meeting of volunteers of Munster, and of the proceedings of the forty-five volunteer delegates assembled at Lisburn on the first inst. respecting a parliamentary reform.

TO &c.

Belfast, 19th July, 1783.

YOUR attachment to the rights of the people, and to the general prosperity of the British empire, induce us to address you on the present great and momentous occasion.

THE spirit of freedom which pervades all ranks of people in Ireland, with the justice and wise policy of the British nation, having for ever removed all possible cause of jealousy between the sister kingdoms, and united us to Britain on the basis of equal liberty and similar constitution; it becomes the duty, as it is the interest of each kingdom, to assist the other in their endeavours to restore to its ancient purity and vigour, a decayed, enfeebled and sickly constitution.

In both nations, it is now generally acknowledged

ed that this great object can be obtained by no other means but by a reform of the representation, in parliament.—In England, the measure has for the present miscarried, though supported by so many wise, honest, great, and independent men :—We trust, however, it has miscarried only for a season, and that the next attempt will prove successful. Ireland has now taken up the idea, and if we shall be so happy as to see success crown our efforts, we think considerable weight will be thereby added to the endeavours of the people in England.—The people of the two nations, united in pursuit of the same important object, must be not only powerful, but irresistible.

THE inclosed papers, which we request you may peruse, will shew how far this country has already gone in determining to procure a more equal representation ;—the unanimous resolutions of about fifteen thousand volunteers, already declared in a very few weeks, assure us the resolves of the delegates of Ulster, who are to assemble on the 8th of September next, will be no less unanimous—and we well know that what the volunteers (vast numbers of whom are freeholders) shall determine on, the other freeholders and people in general, who are not volunteers, will adopt and support, by every means in their power :—The aged fathers cannot differ from their sons, respecting a matter, on which depends every thing that either hold dear for themselves or their posterity.

THAT you may see the very depraved state of our representation, it is necessary to observe, that out of three hundred members, of which our house of commons consists, about two hundred and twenty are

are returned by boroughs.—Those one hundred and ten boroughs are divided into three classes:—1st. Those where the right of election is vested in the protestant inhabitants at large: 2d. Those where the right of election is vested in the chief magistrate, burgesses, and freemen: 3d. Those where the right of election is confined to the chief magistrate and burgesses, frequently not exceeding five or six in number, and seldom above ten or twelve.

ALMOST all the boroughs are either venal and corrupt, or implicitly obedient to the arbitrary will of their respective landlords; who dictate to the electors in the most absolute manner.—Those landlords claim by prescription a kind of property in those boroughs, which they transfer by sale like an estate, and receive from eight thousand to nine thousand pounds for a borough; and a seat for a borough is generally sold for two thousand pounds:—so that every seven or eight years the borough brings in four thousand pounds to the patron. Unhappily for Ireland our counties are also too much governed by our peers and great men, whose influence over many of their respective tenants is very great. This consideration has given rise here to a doubt in the minds of some well-meaning men, as to the propriety of adding to the number of knights of the shire,—as generally now, two great families endeavour to divide between them the seats for the county, the others remain neutral, or join the independent interest;—it is alledged were there six seats for the county, *six* great families would divide them, and that to such a combination the independent freeholders would not be able to make any effectual opposition.

MAY we now entreat as a most important favour conferred on us, and on this kingdom, that you will favour us, with your sentiments and advice, as to the best, most eligible, and most practicable mode of destroying, restraining, or counteracting this hydra of corruption borough—influence ;—that we may be enabled to lay your opinion before the provincial assembly of delegates at Dungannon :—and, as our last meeting for arranging business previous thereto, is fixed to be on the twentieth of August, we hope you will be obliging enough to forward your reply, so as to be with us about that time.

MANY apologies are due for this long address, and for the very great trouble we have requested you to take,—but we are young in politicks, and wish for information from men of more wisdom, experience and abilities.—This however we may venture to assert, that if we can only be directed to *the best mode*, the mass of the inhabitants of Ireland is so compleatly alive and sensible to the necessity of a well-digested reform, that there cannot remain a doubt that what it attempts, in conjunction with the virtuous part of England, must be effectual.

THE several matters on which we have requested your opinion are thrown into one view in the following queries.

IN order to the purity of parliament, and to restore that constitutional controul which the constituent body should have over the representative,—
1st. Is it necessary that the boroughs, where the elective suffrage is vested in a few, and which in general are at the absolute disposal of one or two persons, should be disfranchised, and in their place the county representatives encreased?

2d. The

2d. THE protestant inhabitants consist of near one million, who return three hundred members; would it be wise to encrease the number of representatives for the nation at large?

3d. A plausible objection, mentioned before, has been made against an encrease of county representatives; has that argument much weight, and if it has, is it remediable?

4th. SHOULD suffrage be extended; and if it should, who are the proper objects of such extension?

5th. IN order to guard against undue influence, would it be wise to have the members returned by ballot?

6th. WOULD not a limitation of the duration of parliament, to a shorter term than eight years, have excellent effects; and should it be less than triennial?

7th. If the abolition of the enslaved boroughs is necessary; would it be equitable or expedient that they be purchased by the nation?

8th. WHAT specific mode of reform in the representation of Ireland best suits your own ideas—considering the situation of this country; and what are the steps which you conceive best adapted to effect that reform?

You will be so obliging as to direct your reply to our Chairman Lieut. Col. Sharman, at Lisburn.

Signed by order,

H. JOY, Jun. } Sec.

D

[THE

[THE COMMITTEE OF CORRESPONDENCE understanding that it was the wish of the delegates assembled at Dungannon, that such parts of letters, received from their English correspondents in consequence of the preceding application, as enter at large on, or directly relate to the subject of a parliamentary reform, should be published:—In compliance, the following Letters, arranged according to their dates, are here inserted.]

ENGLISH LETTERS.

To Lieutenant Colonel SHARMAN, Chairman of the COMMITTEE OF CORRESPONDENCE appointed by the forty-five VOLUNTEER CORPS assembled at LISBURN on the first of July, 1783.

SIR,

I THINK myself greatly honoured by the letter addressed to me in the name of the committee of which you are chairman. It is indeed with more satisfaction than I can express, I find that the people of Ireland, after rescuing their trade and their legislature from the oppression of a sister kingdom, are now undertaking to rescue themselves likewise from an *internal* oppression, *no less inconsistent with their liberty*. The occasion is great, and the undertaking important and arduous in the highest degree. Should they be blest with success, they will have completed their own happiness, and exhibited an example which will for ever shine in the annals of mankind. The

subjoined

subjoined paper [for which see page 31] will show that I have been for some time wishing they would carry their views to this object. It was shewn to Mr. Grattan above a year ago, and written when the Duke of Richmond, the Earl of Shelburne, Lord Camden, Mr. Pitt, and other friends to a parliamentary reform, were in power. We are now governed by an odious coalition, formed between whigs and the conductors of the late war, to gratify ambition and party rage by censuring the peace. These united parties are in general hostile to reformation; and this will make it more difficult for the people of Ireland to succeed in their views; but *nothing can be difficult to a people determined to recover their rights*, IF UNANIMOUS AND FIRM. The motive commonly urged to check such exertions, "not to disturb what is quiet," would prevent all improvements, and perpetuate darkness and slavery amongst mankind. It would, in particular, had it influenced in America, have prevented the revolution in favour of the rights of mankind which has lately taken place there; and had it influenced in Ireland, it would have prevented that emancipation of its trade and legislation, which has been lately so happily effected.—The blessings of legitimate government and a free constitution are inestimable. Too much cannot be sacrificed to possess them; and no country possesses them where the body of the people, equally and fairly represented, have not the chief share in the powers of government.

I CAN by no means pretend to that degree of information and knowledge, which is necessary to enable me to give any proper answer to the queries contained in your letter: and the shortness of the time between this and the 20th of August, together with

the dissipated state I am now in at Brighthelmston, will not allow me to be very full and explicit. The committee will, therefore, I hope, accept the following general observations, as the best reply to their queries that I can at present give:—

THE principles of civil liberty require that every independent agent in a state (that is, every one who can be supposed to have a will and judgment of his own) should have a voice in the choice of his governors. But it has been seldom practicable to extend the right of voting so far. In America, where new forms of government are established, more liberal than any the world has yet seen, this right is limited to persons who pay taxes and possess property. Perhaps, it may not be prudent in *Ireland* to go even this length. In these cases, to avoid the danger of losing *all* by aiming at *too much*, the attempts of enlightened men should be governed by a regard to what is most practicable considering present circumstances, and the attachment which always prevails in a country to old establishments. In England, I have wished that the friends of reformation had confined their views at present to the extension of the right of voting to copy-holders, and lease-holders; and the substitution of a hundred knights for counties for a hundred members for boroughs. This, tho' in theory unspeakably too little, would have been a very important reform; and *less* than this, I have not thought much worth contending for. The people in *Ireland* are more alive; and therefore, probably much more may be attempted there with success. But *how* much more I am not qualified to say. Suppose the right of voting was extended to all who possess property of a certain value, and every county divided into six districts, each of which should chuse one.

one representative, leaving the remaining representatives to be chosen by the largest towns and boroughs.—Would this be too great an object? Is it too much to be undertaken without destroying unanimity.

THE duration of parliaments seems a point of less consequence. If chosen by the people at large, they will be short; for it is impossible that a people should not see that the long possession of power will corrupt, and their security against an abuse of power depends on keeping their representatives in a constant state of dependence and responsibility.

IF, on the contrary, parliaments are *not* chosen by the people, shortening their duration will be no remedy. They will not for this be less usurpations and mockeries.

ANNUAL parliaments seem to me preferable to parliaments of any longer duration; not only because they keep the representative body more subject to the controul of its constituents; but also because being chosen more frequently they will be chosen more of course, and with less tumult and riot.

THERE seems to be no reason for changing the number of the representative body in Ireland.

I AM so much an enemy to persecution, that I cannot help wishing the right of voting could be extended to Papists *of property* in common with Protestants. It is unjust to deprive any man of his rights on account of his religion, unless self-defence makes it absolutely necessary. The danger from Papists is perhaps more produced by the penal laws against them, than by their religion. These detach them from the rest

rest of the community, give them a separate interest, and make them enemies. Why should not a Papist be attached to the liberties of his country as well as a Protestant, *if he is allowed to share in them?* In truth, a country which allows him no rights, he cannot reckon *his* country. It is nothing to him whether it is enslaved or free; nor can he care what becomes of it.

If there is any remedy for the evil which occasions the objection against increasing the number of members for counties, it is that extension of the right of voting, and division of counties into districts which I have mentioned.

THE proprietors of the enslaved boroughs do not seem, in reason, entitled to a compensation; because they hold them by usurpation and a kind of robbery. It seems however, necessary that a compensation should be allowed; and this, I suppose, would be done in England were the rotten boroughs disfranchised. The necessity of abolishing such boroughs I think very apparent. *There cannot be worse nuisances in a state!*

I AM sensible, Sir, of the great imperfection of these remarks, and must rely on the candour of the committee. Indeed they have done me too much honour by supposing me capable of advising them. From the Duke of Richmond, Mr. Pitt, &c. they may receive advice that will be more worth their attention. But there is no one whose heart and wishes are more with them. May Heaven grant them success! and may the example of Ireland influence this country and *shame it to imitation!*

Brighthelmston,
Aug. 7th, 1783.

RICHD. PRICE.

P. S. &c.

P.S. *Ireland* is peculiarly situated in two respects. A great majority of the inhabitants are Papists; and a distribution of property more unequal than in *England* or *America*, subjects them more to aristocratic tyranny. I have hinted as a remedy for the former inconvenience, the admission of Papists to equal rights; but there may be stronger objections to this than I am aware of.

Trade and liberty will, it is to be hoped, in time diffuse property more in *Ireland*, and produce a less unequal distribution of it.

To the armed VOLUNTEERS of IRELAND.

A NATIVE of *England*, but a citizen of the world, and a warm friend to universal liberty, congratulates them with great satisfaction, on their success in obtaining, without bloodshed, that precious blessing for which torrents of blood have been shed in *America*; and, rejoicing in their emancipation, he wishes to propose to them the following queries.

1st. HAVING seized the favourable opportunity which the war with *America* has offered them, should they not be anxious about improving it to the utmost, from a conviction that such another opportunity may never offer itself.

2dly. HAVING succeeded in making themselves free externally, should it not be their next concern to make themselves free internally? And while they want the one, can they possess any just security for the other?

3dly. Is

3dly. Is not a free and equal representation essential to the internal liberty of a kingdom?

4thly. Is *Ireland* possessed of such a representation? Or is not, on the contrary, a vast majority of its House of Commons chosen, not by the people, but, as in England, by a few grandees and beggars.

5thly. By establishing an equal representation, may not the people of Ireland do their sister kingdom a most important service, by provoking its emulation and rendering it ashamed of its own corrupt and mock representation?

6thly. HAVE they not reason to expect from the liberality of the new ministers and the endeavours which some of them are now using to gain an equal representation of England, that they will rejoice to see this work undertaken in *Ireland* and give it their encouragement and support?

Lastly. Is it not therefore almost certain that the Volunteers and Patriots of Ireland will easily succeed in this undertaking, if they set themselves to it with that glorious zeal which they have hitherto discovered, and by which they have exhibited to the world an example of public spirit and virtue scarcely ever before known, and which must render them the admiration of future ages?

August, 1782.

To Mr. HENRY JOY, *Junior*, SECRETARY of the COMMITTEE of CORRESPONDENCE, at BELFAST.

*Burton-Hall, near Bedal,
Aug. 22, 1783.*

SIR,

ACCORDING to your desire, my answer to the Queries of the Committee of Correspondence at Belfast, was transmitted to Lieut. Col. Sharman, at Lisburn, on the 12th instant. But wishing to guard against a miscarriage, which in the hurry of a general election may be possible, I take the liberty to trouble you with a duplicate of my answer.

THE committee of Yorkshire is expected to meet about the end of September; when your letters, and the other papers communicated by your respectable committee, will be laid before the Yorkshire gentlemen. I am firmly persuaded they will rejoice at the noble spirit of reformation, which has arisen in Ireland; they will sincerely wish to their worthy fellow-subjects complete success: I trust also, they will be most ready to co-operate with them in any legal mode which can be devised, mutually to assist each other, in the laudable and necessary undertaking to obtain a substantial reformation of Parliament, in the respective kingdoms of Ireland and Great Britain.

I am Sir,

with great respect,

your most obedient servant,

C. WYVILL.

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Mr.

Mr. WYVILL'S Answer to the QUERIES propo-
sed to him by the COMMITTEE OF COR-
RESPONDENCE at BELFAST.

I. IN all attempts by a free people to improve the frame of their legislature, it seems advisable as much as may be possible, to preserve ancient foundations; and to suffer every part of the fabric to stand, which is not absolutely incapable of substantial repair. In my opinion, it is unnecessary and inexpedient; to disfranchise the populous boroughs in Ireland, in which the right of election is vested in a few persons. In such boroughs, a due extension of the right of suffrage is sufficient to obtain every desirable purpose; but all the little depopulated boroughs ought certainly to be disfranchised, and their privilege of Parliamentary representation should be transferred to those populous districts which are unrepresented, or whose share of representation is inadequate.

II. In consequence of the proposed disfranchisement of the smallest class of Boroughs a sufficient share of the representation can be transferred to the larger districts, it does not seem necessary that the number of the Irish House of Commons should be increased. The liberty of the nation may be well protected by a House of Commons, whose members do not exceed three hundred; if those members be firmly connected with the body of the nation. But if from the paucity of boroughs proper to be disfranchised, or from the influence of powerful men interested to preserve such boroughs, a sufficient share of the representation cannot be transferred to the larger districts; the present number of the House of Commons.

mons in Ireland, compared with the elective body, is by no means so large as to forbid any addition of members. For what secures a Parliament in the interest of the public? DUE ELECTION, AND A SPEEDY RETURN INTO THE COMMON MASS. A Senate thus constituted would instantly feel what the community felt, and faithfully act according to the wishes of their constituents. These are the essential requisites in the formation and conduct of a House of Commons; and where they are found, it is of little moment, whether the assembly consist of three hundred persons, or of any larger number, not exceeding those limits, beyond which it is not easy to preserve order in a deliberative assembly. On these grounds it may be presumed, that no solid objection to an augmentation of the Irish House of Commons could be offered, even if the present elective body were incapable of increase. But since the time is perhaps arrived, or may not be very distant when the Catholics of Ireland might be safely admitted to a participation in the right of Election, the difficulty wholly vanishes.

III. WHERE property is very unequally distributed, aristocratical influence will be found to operate extensively; and no means can be devised completely to guard the community against the mischievous consequences of that influence, without a breach of the laws of property; which hardly ever can be justifiable. But regulations may be framed, by which the danger from an excessive power in the aristocracy may be averted; and in some tolerable degree that share of influence may be obtained by the people, without which they cannot possess a free constitution, or have any substantial security that the true interests of the nation will be steadily pursued by Government. Laws

extending the right of suffrage to fit classes of men; prohibiting bribery and expence at elections; and facilitating the voters access to the place of polling; those are the most obvious and effectual means by which the commons may be protected against a domineering aristocracy, without recurring to the desperate expedient of an agrarian law. And since the counties of Ireland are inadequately represented, and since the natural luxury of the rich, and the growing industry of the poor, will combine to lessen the evil complained of; it seems adviseable that the county representation should be reinforced, and at the same time that every proper regulation to check the excess of aristocratical influence should be introduced.

IV. The fourth query has been in some measure answered in the reply to the third. It seems not to admit a doubt, that the right of suffrage should be extended in Ireland. But the difficult part of the question is, TO WHOM? Conscious as I am how delicate the subject is, I cannot however decline to give my sentiments upon it with plainness, and unreserved sincerity.

It is the right of mankind to be governed by their own consent, given personally; or by representation. On this principle all just government has been originally formed. It was the principle on which our Saxon ancestors founded their constitution; and though it must be admitted, that from the first introduction of a deputed assembly of the people in England, the principle never was strictly adhered to, and that in fact the right of election was not universally enjoyed, even before the statute of disfranchisement passed in the eighth year of Henry the sixth, yet the principle was still appealed to, and by a legal fifti-

on supposed to exist in practice. Such was the happy equality of mankind in the earlier stages of society; & ill exchanged, in my opinion, for the glare and glitter of a more splendid scene, where the loss of the political happiness of the MANY, is poorly compensated by the pomp and magnificence of a FEW INDIVIDUALS.

IN countries where property is equally divided, or nearly so, it can hardly be supposed that the unlimited right of suffrage may not be established. If such an exception to all political experience should occur, the circumstances which could occasion the limitation, must be of a very extraordinary nature. But in states where property has been distributed with considerable inequality, some diminution of popular privileges has usually taken place: and in far the greatest part of the globe, where the extremes of riches and poverty almost divide each community, those privileges have been trampled under the foot of their tyrannical rulers; and scarcely a vestige of them is to be found, even in these free countries of Ireland and Britain. There seems to have been a culpable propensity to contract these rights to a degree for which there was no sufficient reason. The interests of mankind require that the basis of society should be broad; the rules of justice require that their natural rights should not be taken away, but upon proof of misusage, or political delinquency. I am satisfied therefore, that where the right of universal suffrage has not been found actually inconsistent with the public safety, it ought not to be abridged. But in all cases where the claims of individuals are incompatible with the general good, the privileges of a part of the community must be postponed to the welfare of the WHOLE. For the law of self preservation is

is to societies; as it is to individuals, an indefeasible law; and by that law societies are justifiable which reject from the full enjoyment of the rights of citizens, persons to whom those rights could not be continued without danger to the public. The election franchise may be considered as both a privilege and a trust; and men who have been found incapable of executing that trust, in a manner not disadvantageous to the community, are unfit to remain invested with it. That trust may be as properly taken from such men, as by the concession of the advocates for its widest extension, it may be withheld from women, minors, and persons of some other descriptions. But men from whom this franchise has been taken, ought to be permitted to renounce their allegiance to the state, and to transfer it to another. If in that case they acquiesce under the deprivation, without renouncing their allegiance to the state, or even expressing any dissatisfaction, their acquiescence would amount to a tacit acceptance of virtual representation; and they would still be governed, as they ought to be, by their own consent.

In communities, in which this deprivation has already taken place, similar reasoning will determine to what classes of men the election franchise ought to be restored, or may be justly refused. It ought to be restored to all who may be reasonably expected to exercise it for the public good. This is indisputably clear; and it seems equally certain that it may be justly refused to all to whom it would be unsafe to impart it; whom candour would judge most likely to misuse their privilege; and to be guilty of that political delinquency for which their original deprivation would be justifiable.

THOSE

THOSE observations are alike applicable to the case of Britain, and of Ireland. In both countries numerous classes of men have been deprived of this franchise, but the liberal temper of the times, aided in each by some favourable concomitant circumstances, has brought this question to a serious discussion; what restoration of the right of election ought to be proposed, or is fit to be established? The mere inequality of property alone, is by no means a valid objection to the most extensive restoration. For if from the love of order, justice, and liberty prevalent in the lower classes, and the meek and unambitious spirit of their superiors, no material danger were to be apprehended from the influence of a wealthy aristocracy, or from numerous and frequent assemblies of the populace; in such circumstances, notwithstanding the unequal division of property, the right of suffrage might be safely restored to the excluded classes, and therefore it ought not to be refused.

WHETHER Ireland be a country thus fortunately circumstanced; or not, it behoves the delegates of Ulster to consider with strict impartiality. In what degree the manners of the Irish people are corrupt, to what extent the property of their country is unequally distributed, the delegates will be most competent to judge. But if aristocratical power be found too predominant in the counties of Ireland, under the present limitations of the right of election; as it is stated to be in the letter of the 19th of July, by the committee at Belfast; the extension of that right to persons in a situation of absolute dependence on the Great, would render their power wholly irresistible. If the capital contain a numerous and a profligate populace, the periodical assembly of that populace for the purpose of elections would too prob-

bly produce tumults and all the wild and pernicious effects of frantic Insurrection. Evils like these would be more intolerable, than those abuses which are now so justly complained of; and unless some effectual remedy were speedily applied to them, would lead Ireland through a series of fatal calamities, to the utter ruin of its constitution.

PRESUMING Ireland to be a country nearly in this situation, I cannot venture to recommend the restoration of universal suffrage. In my opinion the circumstances here described must be considerably altered, before the refusal of that unlimited privilege can be thought unjust. At present, the utmost length to which the right of election there seems safely communicable, is to impart it to every class of men, who from the possession of property to some small amount, may be thought likely to exercise their franchise freely, and for the public good. To concede the right of suffrage in Ireland beyond that boundary, appears not consistent with national prudence, or the safety of the public; and therefore, in my apprehension, is not required by justice. In this opinion I am countenanced by the general practice of the free states of antiquity; I am supported by that of modern Europe, and the more recent example of America. In the American Republics, property is more equally divided, and the manners of the people are more simple, orderly and incorrupt, than they are in those kingdoms. And yet in them some qualification of property has been thought necessary to intitle inhabitants to the right of voting. In Massachusetts, and some other American States, the landed qualification exceeds that of an English freeholder.—I should be still farther confirmed in these sentiments, if the excluded classes discovered no anxiety to regain this im-

important privilege, even when it became the subject of national debate. For why should the work of political reformation be loaded with great, and perhaps insurmountable difficulties, by struggling to impart to the non-electors, a franchise which they are neither likely to exercise with discretion, nor solicitous to obtain?

By the rule here suggested, all persons paying taxes within the counties, cities, and boroughs of Ireland would be comprehended among their voters; and to the county electors also would be added persons holding land by copy-hold, by lease-hold for life, or a term exceeding thirty years; equal in value to the freehold qualification.

By the same rule it is understood, that Catholics of similar qualifications in property would be admitted to the choice of representatives, together with their Protestant brethren. It must be confessed that this concession to humanity and liberal policy could not be proposed in Britain with any prospect of success. But Ireland, by granting a complete toleration to Catholics, has displayed the true spirit of candour and equity. And on this great occasion of reforming its constitution, the same equitable spirit will naturally lead that country not to exclude those men from the primary right of citizens, by whose assistance, its own independence and dignity were obtained. The Catholics of former generations may have been justly degraded from the class of electors; because an attachment to a foreign POTENTATE, dangerous to the peace and welfare of their country, may then have formed an essential part of their religious creed. But why should men whose religious opinions are now deemed inoffensive to the state, and therefore fit to be tolerated by law, be thought unfit to concur

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with their fellow-citizens in the election of representatives? The established religion would be secure as it is at present; because Catholic voters could not elect Catholic legislators. However their mode of christianity may be disapproved, however necessary it may be to oppose the re-admission of that system, as the religion of our country; and no person disapproves it more completely or would resist its re-establishment more strenuously than the writer of this paper; yet surely in matters of merely civil concern, the profession of errors acknowledged to be harmless to the state, ought not to be a disqualification. Surely christians of every sect may be admitted to enjoy those political privileges, from which persons untinctured by any religion are not excluded. If on this occasion the right of suffrage should be extended to Catholics, let them receive the indulgence not from the insidious clemency of a court, but from the friendship and magnanimity of their Protestant fellow-subjects, and the peace, the liberty of Ireland will be unhurt by the concession.

5. ELECTIONS by ballot seem to be unadvisable. In places where no undue influence can be exerted, the concealment of the ballot is totally unnecessary. But where that influence is predominant, it ought to be resisted, not by a practice encouraging cowardly dissimulation and breach of promise; but by open and honourable means; by means consonant with truth, integrity, and the courageous spirit of Liberty.

6. THE duration of parliaments ought to be limited to a shorter term than eight years. If it should be found as practicable to obtain annual, as triennial parliaments, the preference in point of efficacy seems due to annual parliaments. But the beneficial effects
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of triennial, or of annual parliaments will not be so sensibly felt, till the representation has been meliorated, and elections have been rendered incorrupt and unexpensive.

7. It would be expedient that a satisfactory compensation should be given by the nation to the proprietors of those boroughs which may be abolished. If this were understood to be the intention of the public, a less animated opposition to the disfranchisement of boroughs might be expected. But a more harsh mode of reformation would disgust and exasperate individuals; which would be extremely imprudent, when an expence slight to a whole kingdom, might purchase their acquiescence, and preserve general harmony. Undoubtedly a compensation is what strict justice does not enjoin; the nation has an absolute right to revoke privileges which are become injurious to its welfare; but in the view of equity, as well as that of policy, this more lenient mode of correcting abuses, which time may have introduced, without any marked criminality of the present proprietors, seems to be preferable.

8. FROM the answers which have been returned to the former queries, my opinion respecting the eighth and last query, in some measure might be collected. But the reply to the most important question of them all, shall not be less explicit than those which have been already given. If then I had the honour to be delegated to attend the meeting at Dungannon, my present ideas on the subject would lead me,

1. To recommend with all possible earnestness, the abolition of every small and decayed borough; and the gift of a reasonable compensation to every person immediately affected by that act; with permission to

the disfranchised electors to vote at elections for their respective counties.

2. To propose the reinforcement of the representation, by transferring to the counties, the capital, and considerable unrepresented towns, if there be any such in Ireland, the members taken from the disfranchised boroughs; and also by adding to them as many new members, as might be necessary clearly to turn the balance of legislative power in favour of the counties, principal cities, and towns, which form the body of the nation, and in which the strength of the Irish democracy resides.

3. To suggest the utility of extending the right of suffrage to all persons paying taxes in the counties, cities and boroughs; to all copyholders, and leaseholders, for life or a term exceeding thirty years, the yearly value of whose estates shall be at least forty shillings; and also the propriety of admitting Christians of every denomination to the equal exercise of that most important right of a citizen.

4. To advise a shorter duration of parliaments, preferring annual parliaments to triennial, if equally attainable.

5. AND for securing the advantages of those measures in their full extent, to recommend the strictest prohibition of bribery and expence at elections, and regulations facilitating to the respective voters the exercise of their franchise.

SUCH are the improvements which appear to my mind, most practicable, safe and efficacious, in the present state of Ireland, to restore TO THE PEOPLE UNARMED THEIR JUST AND NECESSARY CON-

CONTROUL OVER THE REPRESENTATIVE ASSEMBLY. To some of the delegates at Dunganon, these propositions might appear not extensive enough. To many more perhaps they might seem too extensive to be at once adopted with prudence.

HAVING therefore offered these propositions to the meeting, I should think it ill became me to adhere to them with pertinacity. On the contrary, it would be more suitable to my very limited experience, and imperfect knowledge of Irish affairs, and also more conducive to the success of the great cause, to submit my opinion with deference to better informed judgments; and to accede to a less extensive plan for a substantial reformation of parliament; in favour of which a more general concurrence of the Volunteers might be probable. For that is the best plan of reformation, which is the most effectual that is likely to be attained.

THE means for obtaining those regulations, or other improvements which may be deemed more salutary, are sufficiently obvious. To restore a declining constitution, is the duty, the interest, and the peculiar office of the collective body. Self-reformation is an odious task to corrupt assemblies of men, as it is to profligate individuals. A degenerate parliament will never seriously engage in that business, but from the impulse of the people. By their active zeal the work of reformation must be begun; by their firmness and perseverance it must be finished. In a more tolerable condition of parliament, it would be sufficient to state an abuse; and of its own accord an honest house of commons would immediately apply the proper correction. But when the mischief lies in the frame and disposition of parliament itself, it behoves

moves the people not only to specify their grievance, but to point out on what principle, and to what extent they expect redress. For if the popular complaint be well founded, parliament cannot be qualified to judge for the people with due impartiality; nor disposed spontaneously to grant that mode of reformation which may appear best adapted to promote their happiness. Hence proceeds the principal difficulty of this great enterprize,—When the claim of independence was the object of pursuit, there was but one simple proposition before each provincial meeting; and in that proposition every Irishman was agreed. If the volunteer assemblies should deliberate apart on the general question only, whether a reformation of parliament be expedient, there is little reason to apprehend any material diversity of opinion would arise. But if the question to be considered, should be, what specific plan of reformation is most fit to be proposed to parliament; the discussion of that proposition in many distinct assemblies might unhappily divide the volunteers. The reformation of parliament is an ample field of speculation, in which the sentiments of wise and good men may be widely different. It is a subject of the highest practical importance, on which those various sentiments may be maintained with warmth and eagerness. In the progress of those disputes the provincial meetings might form different opinions; they might be heated; they might be alienated; the ill offices of artful and interested men might increase the disgust; till the formation of a general union in favour of any specific plan, would become exceedingly difficult, if not wholly impracticable. In order to guard against so fatal a disunion, it seems adviseable, if the specific plan ought to originate from the people, that a **GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF DELEGATES** from every

every part of Ireland should meet, and determine what that specific plan should be. By such a meeting, the union of the volunteers might be completely preserved; and the application from that meeting for an effectual redress of parliamentary abuses would be presented to parliament with the weight and authority of the whole collective body. It is needless to add that their requisition **MUST** be complied with.

SUCH is the judgment which I have formed on the most impartial consideration of the queries transmitted for my opinion by the committee of Belfast. I feel myself much honoured by the gentlemen who have called forth my sentiments on this momentous occasion. By imposing that honourable task upon me, they have committed to my hands an important trust, which I am bound to execute with scrupulous fidelity, with conscientious sincerity. I am but too well convinced, that what I have been able to suggest, deserves not much of their attention. But the opinion now given has been formed, and delivered under a sense of duty. And if this communication offer nothing else which may be fortunate enough to meet their approbation, yet I am confident the delegates of Ulster will approve the freedom and integrity of my answer.

As a man I sincerely wish the enjoyment of liberty, in its most ample extent, to men in every climate and country; but as fellow-subjects I am deeply and more peculiarly interested in the welfare and happiness of Irishmen. When the volunteers of Ireland successfully asserted the honour and independence of their country, I rejoiced at its emancipation from an injurious controul. When they abolished persecution, and gave peace and security to millions of their
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oppressed brethren, my heart concurred and approved the deed. When they checked the corrupt profusion of the public money, I joined with every virtuous man in applauding this prelude to a more important reformation. To restore a sinking constitution is their last and greatest labour! It is a task whose difficulty can only be exceeded by the immense advantage resulting from the performance. Nothing else can give permanent security to the freedom and prosperity of Ireland. When the zeal and spirit by which the volunteers gained those benefits to their country shall be relaxed, unless a radical reformation of parliament shall have been first accomplished, the benefits themselves will not be of long duration: They will be lost again, or they will be left under circumstances of public distress, in which, enjoyment will be impossible. The mischief of a factious and corrupt government will be felt once more; ministerial profusion will again seduce the senate, and impoverish the community. In this state of things, liberty will be precarious and commerce and industry will be undone. And then, when the poor Catholic is starving for want of employment, toleration itself will be to him a comfort of little avail. Even the joy excited in the public mind by the acquisition of independence will soon sink, and be lost in the superior sense of domestic misery. But I trust a different, and far happier scene is just ready to open upon Ireland. From the vigour and virtue of the Irish people, conducted by the wisdom of their delegates, a substantial reformation of parliament, with every national blessing in its train, may soon be expected. Let them but persevere in the same spirited, temperate, and legal conduct, which hitherto has marked their character with honour; let them be firm;

them be unanimous ; and in this just and necessary undertaking, as in all the rest, THE VOLUNTEERS OF IRELAND will command that success, which they so well deserve,

C. W Y V I L L.

*To Lieut. Col. SHARMAN, Chairman of
the COMMITTEE of CORRESPONDENCE at
BELFAST.*

S I R,

I HAVE been honored with a letter from Belfast, dated the 19th of July last, written in the name of the committee of correspondence appointed by the delegates of forty-five Volunteer corps assembled at Lisburn on the first of the same month, for taking preparatory steps to forward their intentions on the subject of a more equal representation of the people in parliament, and signed by their Secretary, Mr. Henry Joy, Jun.

IN this letter after shewing the corrupt state of the boroughs in Ireland, the general opinion of the people that the constitution can be restored to its ancient purity and vigour, by *no* other means than a parliamentary reform, and informing me of the steps which have been taken and are taking by the volunteers in determining to procure this desirable object, the committee is pleased " to request my sentiments and advice as to the best, most eligible, and most practicable mode of destroying, restraining, or counteract-

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ing this hydra of corruption borough influence, in order to lay my opinion before the provincial assembly of delegates which is to be held at Dungannon, on the 8th of September next."

THIS great mark of confidence from gentlemen in whom so much trust is placed, does me great honour, for as I have not the pleasure of being personally known to any of them, I can owe it but to the favourable opinion they are pleased to entertain of my constant and zealous endeavours in the public service.

I AM sensible that the only proper return I can make for this honourable distinction is to obey their commands in the best manner I am able; for although my insufficiency for so arduous a task would afford me but too good an excuse for declining it, yet I feel it would be inconsistent with my ideas of the obligation every man is under to serve the publick as well as he can, if I was to refuse giving my opinions, such as they are, when thus called upon by a respectable body of gentlemen. Besides my inability, I have to regret the want of time to collect and arrange my thoughts in such a manner as to be fit to appear before you, and the necessary limits of a letter which will not admit of the extensive investigation which a subject of this vast importance deserves; for altho' I fear I must be long, I am sensible I cannot do it justice.

THE subject of a parliamentary reform; is that which of all others in my opinion most deserves the attention of the publick, as I conceive it would include every other advantage which a nation can wish; and I have no hesitation in saying that from every consideration which I have been able to give to this
great

great question, that for many years has occupied my mind, and from every day's experience to the present hour, I am more and more convinced that the restoring the right of voting universally to every man not incapacitated by nature for want of reason, or by law for the commission of crimes, together with annual elections, is the only reform that can be effectual and permanent. I am further convinced that it is the only reform that is practicable,

ALL other plans that are of a palliative nature have been found insufficient to interest and animate the great body of the people, from whose earnestness alone any reform can be expected. A long exclusion from any share in the legislature of their country has rendered the great mass of the people indifferent whether the monopoly that subsists, continues in the hands of a more or less extended company; or whether it is divided by them into shares of somewhat more or less just proportions: the publick feels itself unconcerned in these contests, except as to the oppressions it endures, and the exactions it suffers, which it knows must continue so long as the people remain deprived of all controul over their representatives. This indifference of theirs when the last attempt was made for additional county members was used by our opponents as an argument against all reform; it was asked with a triumphant air, where are the petitions from the inhabitants of Birmingham, Manchester, Halifax, and other great unrepresented towns? and their silence was deemed a proof of their acquiescence and satisfaction in the present form of elections. The truth is, that the people have been so often deceived, that they will now scarcely trust any set of men; and nothing but self evident conviction that a measure tends effectually

ally to the recovery of their rights can, or indeed ought to interest them in its favor.

THE lesser reform has been attempted with every possible advantage in its favor, not only from the zealous support of the advocates for a more effectual one, but from the assistance of men of great weight both in and out of power. But with all these temperaments and helps it has failed; not one profelyte has been gained from corruption, nor has the least ray of hope been held out from any quarter, that the House of Commons was inclined to adopt any other mode of reform. The weight of corruption has crushed this more gentle, as it would have defeated any more efficacious plan in the same circumstances. From that quarter therefore I have nothing to hope. It is from the people at large that I expect any good, and I am convinced that the only way to make them feel that they are really concerned in the business, is to contend for their full, clear, and indisputable rights of universal representation. I call them such, not only from my own conviction, but from the admission of the friends to the more moderate plan, who in the second address of the Yorkshire committee to the people confess, that our claims are founded on the true principles of the constitution, and only object to them on account of impracticability. But their plan has now had a fair trial, and, if it is from the inclinations of parliament that practicability is to be expected, has been found as impracticable as ours.

THE more extensive plan, at the same time that its operation is more compleat depends on a more effectual support, that of the people.

I AM also persuaded that if the scheme for additional county members had proceeded any further, infinite

finite difficulties would have arisen in adjusting it. Neither the Yorkshire committee nor Mr. Pitt have given the detail of their plan. A just repartition would have been a most intricate task; for where different interests are separately represented, the proportion is not very easy to ascertain. The doubt you state concerning this mode of reform appears to me well founded; a few great families might divide a county between them, and chuse the members by a house list like East-India directors. Another difficulty from the increase of the number of members, which might render the house more tumultuous than deliberative, has its weight. But the greatest objection in my opinion to this, and to every other narrow and contracted plan of reform, is that it proceeds upon the same bad principle as the abuse it pretends to rectify; it is still partial and unequal: a vast majority of the community is still left unrepresented: and its most essential concerns, life, liberty, and property, continue in the absolute disposal of those whom they do not chuse, and over whom they have no controul. In the arrangement of plans of this kind, there is no leading principle to determine that the addition ought to be one hundred, fifty, or two hundred: that the allotment should be according to the population, property, or taxes paid in each county; that any supposed proportion between the landed and trading interest is the just one; and that the division of county and city members will correspond with this proportion when found. All is at sea, without any compass to enable us to distinguish the safe from the dangerous course.

BUT in the more liberal and great plan of universal representation a clear and distinct principle at once appears that cannot lead us wrong. Not conveniency,

cy, but right. If it is not a maxim of our constitution that a British subject is to be governed only by laws to which he has consented by himself or his representative, we should instantly abandon the error; but if it is the essential of freedom founded on the eternal principles of justice and wisdom, and our unalienable birth-right, we should not hesitate in asserting it. Let us then but determine to act upon this broad principle of giving to every man his own, and we shall immediately get rid of all the perplexities to which the narrow notions of partiality and exclusion must ever be subject. In the digesting a plan upon this noble foundation, we shall not find any difficulty that the most common understanding and pains will not easily surmount. It does not require half the ingenuity of a common tax bill; and as a proof of this assertion, I myself drew the form of a bill for this purpose which I presented to the House of Lords in 1780. Not as a perfect work, but merely to shew how easily the objections to the practicability of the plan and the inconveniencies that are suggested, might be got over.

I BELIEVE the sending you a copy of my bill will be the best way of explaining its operations. I have not one ready at this moment, but it shall soon follow this letter.

I SHALL therefore only mention at present a few of its provisions, which I think entirely remove the most plausible objections that have been urged against it.

THE present number of members in the House of Commons is preserved, so that all apprehensions from too numerous an assembly ceases.

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AN account of the whole number of males of age in the kingdom is to be taken and divided by the number of members to be sent, which will find the quota of electors to chuse one member. From the best accounts I can now get, it will be about two thousand six hundred. These are to be formed into districts or boroughs from the most contiguous parishes, and by having all the elections throughout the kingdom in one and the same day, and taken in each parish, all fear of riots and tumults vanishes.

THE great expence of elections, which arises chiefly from the cost of conveying electors to the place of poll and entertaining them there and on the road will be no more when every man will vote in his own parish. Bribery must entirely cease: in a single borough it would be difficult; on so many as to any have effect, impossible. The numbers to be bought would be infinitely too great for any purse. Besides, annual Parliaments by their frequency, and by their shortness would doubly operate in preventing corruption.

THE vast expence of petitions to parliament on account of illegal returns would be reduced almost to nothing. The points on which these contests generally turn, are the qualifications of the electors under the numberless restrictions the present laws have imposed, which require the attendance of witnesses, the production of records, and are subject to infinite dispute. But when no other qualification shall be necessary but that of being a British subject and of age, there can be but little left to contend upon as to the right of electors to vote: all other questions that could afford ground for a petition would be trifling and might be decided in one day.

MANY

MANY other objections are obviated by the bill, but it is needless here to mention them. But there is another sort of objection against which no provision can be made as it is merely imaginary. It is feared by some that the influence of power and riches will give to the aristocracy so great a lead in these elections as to place the whole government in their hands. Others again dread that when paupers and the lowest orders of the people shall have an equal vote with the first commoner in the kingdom, we shall fall into all the confusion of a democratick republick. The contrariety of these two apprehensions might of itself be a sufficient proof that neither extreme will take place. It is true that the poorest man in the kingdom will have an equal vote with the first, for the choice of the person to whom he trusts his all, and I think he ought to have that equal degree of security against oppression. It is also true that men of superior fortunes will have a superior degree of weight and influence, and I think that as education and knowledge generally attend property, those who possess them ought to have weight and influence with the more ignorant. But the essential difference will be, that altho' the people may be led, they cannot then be driven. Property will have its weight, as it ever must have in all governments, and I conceive that in this plan, it will precisely find its just proportion combined with talents and character. A man of great property that is beloved and esteemed, will as he ought have the greatest sway; but tyranny and oppression tho' attended with riches may be resisted, and will no longer be attended with a burgage tenure at command.

ANOTHER subject of apprehension is that the principle of allowing to every man an equal right to vote tends to equality in other respects and to level property

erty. To me it seems to have a direct contrary tendency. The equal rights of men to security from oppression, and to the enjoyment of life and liberty strike me as perfectly compatible with their unequal shares of industry, labour, and genius, which are the origin of inequality of fortunes. The equality and inequality of men are both founded in nature, and whilst we do not confound the two and only support her establishments, we cannot err. The protection of property appears to me one of the most essential ends of society; and so far from injuring it by this plan, I conceive it to be the only means of preserving it, for the present system is hastening with great strides to a perfect equality in universal poverty.

It has been said that this plan of extending the right of voting to *every* individual creates much uneasiness in the minds of quiet and well disposed persons; and that if paupers, vagabonds, and persons of no property were left out, there would be no objection to extend it to all householders and persons paying taxes, and that the same division into districts might take place. My answer is that I know of no man, be he ever so poor, who in his consumption of food, and use of rayment does not pay taxes, and that I would wish to encourage an enthusiasm for his country in the breast of every subject, by giving him his just share in its government. I readily admit that such an alteration would be a vast improvement, but I must prefer the adhering rigidly to a self-evident principle, especially when attended with no inconvenience in the execution that I can foresee. Besides we should again fall into the difficulties of drawing the line of separation, and into the disputes about a qualification.

THE apprehensions that our government will become too democrattick have been urged upon another ground. It has been said that the house of commons has usurped the whole power of government: that the crown in reality no longer possesses its negative, and must in all things be ruled by the house of commons: that the house of lords in consequence of its exclusion (by the will of the house of commons, not by law) from interfering in money bills, no longer in fact exercises the functions of a branch of the legislature, that the only means by which the balance of the constitution is now in any degree preserved, is by the irregular influence of the crown, and of the peers in the house of commons, and that if they are totally excluded from interference there, as it is supposed will be the case if this bill passes, and are not restored to their original share of power, the equilibrium will be destroyed and the government become purely democrattick.

To remedy this objection it has been answered by others that it is but just and reasonable, and that they mean at the same time that the commons are restored to their rights, that the crown and the peers should recover theirs.

THIS answer has been ridiculed, in my opinion, with more wit than solidity of argument. It has been represented as admitting that whilst the house of commons continues corrupt, the king and lords should submit to its decisions, but that when it should really speak the voice of the people, then it would be right to revive the dormant powers of resisting it.

For my part, I agree in opinion with those who are for restoring to all parts of the state their just rights at the same time; to do it generally not partially.

tially is what I must contend for. At the same time I admit that I am not for restoring the negative of the crown; my reason is that it appears to me preposterous that the will of one man should for ever obstruct every regulation which all the rest of the nation may think necessary. I object to it, as I would to any other prerogative of the crown, or privilege of the Lords or people that is not founded on reason.

BUT I agree that if the house of commons was reduced to its natural dependence on the people alone, and the present system of making it the executive part of government was continued, we should approach to a pure democracy more than our constitution warrants, or than I wish to see. I am not for a democratic any more than for an aristocratic or monarchic government solely. I am for that admirable mixture of the three that our inimitable and comprehensive constitution has established. I wish to see the executive part of government revert to where the constitution has originally placed it, in the hands of the crown to be carried on by its ministers: those ministers under the controul of parliament, and parliament under the controul of the people. I would not have parliament made, as it daily is, a party concerned in every act of state, whereby it becomes the executive for which it is not calculated, and loses its superintending and controuling power which is the main end of its institution; for when the two houses are previously pledged by addresses, votes, and resolutions it becomes extremely difficult for them afterwards to censure measures in which they have been so deeply engaged by acts of their own. Another great inconveniency arises from parliaments taking so much of the executive of government on itself, which is the excessive length of the sessions; an evil which of late has greatly increased. Now that parliament

is engaged in every detail in order to screen the minister, it can never finish its business till the middle of summer, when the independent country gentleman, tired of a long attendance and hot weather in town, is retired to his private business in the country, and that of the public left to be settled in thin houses by a few dependants of the minister. A short session of two or three months would be sufficient to examine the expenditure of former grants, to make new ones, to redress grievances, and pass such general laws as circumstances might require. The inconveniency and expence to a private member of parliament in attending his duty would then be trifling; and instead of forty commoners and three peers to form a quorum to decide the greatest matters of state, the attendance of two thirds of each body, which would give respect to their proceedings, might and ought to be required.

I AM also free to own my opinion, that when the House of Lords shall be effectually prevented from having any influence in the house of commons, as I think it must by this bill, it should at the same time recover its equal rights in every respect with the house of commons as a co-ordinate branch of the legislature.

THESE sentiments are I think consonant to the idea so well expressed in your letter to the Volunteer army of the province of Ulster, "to restore to the crown its original splendor, to nobility its ancient privileges, and to the nation at large its inherent rights."

I BELIEVE I have now troubled you with all that is necessary concerning my plan; my bill will shew the detail as far as concerns the house of commons and
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the election of Scotch peers; the regulations for restoring to the crown its executive, and to the House of Lords its deliberative functions should be added to and form a part of this bill, but I have not as yet had time and leisure to prepare them.

In what I have said, I have shewn my opinion concerning the 1st, 3d, 4th, 6th and 8th questions you have proposed to me. There remains the 2d, 5th, and 7th, to be considered.

In respect to the second, which I presume relates to the admission of Roman Catholics to vote at elections, I can only say that the same principles which go to civil liberty, equally lead to liberty of conscience. I admire with you the glorious spirit of toleration which you say, has united the once distracted inhabitants of Ireland into one indissoluble mass; and I am sure that nothing short of evident danger to the state can warrant its interference in religious opinions. But unacquainted as I am with the state of Ireland, it is impossible for me to know the present temper and disposition of the Roman Catholics there; and those only who are on the spot can judge how far exclusions of this sort are necessary or ought to extend.

With regard to the 5th question, if voting by ballot is advisable? I am clearly of opinion that it is not. The idea of a ballot can have arisen but to avoid the effect of some improper influence; and I conceive it much more noble, directly to check that influence than indirectly to evade it, by concealment and deceit. I am convinced that trivial circumstances in things like this tend greatly to form the national character, and that it is most consistent with that of a British, or Irish freeman, that all his actions should be open and avowed, and that he should not be ashamed of declaring in the face of his country whom
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he wishes to intrust with its interests. Upon the same idea that ballots may be a cover for independence, they must also be a cloak for bribery and a school for lying and deceit.

As to the 7th question, whether it would not be equitable or expedient that boroughs now in the possession of individuals should be purchased by the nation?

I THINK that although no man can have a strict claim in equity to be refunded the loss of what neither buyer nor seller had a right to barter, yet it will be wise to purchase the good will, or at least to soften the resistance of the present powerful possessors of boroughs, by a most ample compensation. The liberties of a nation cannot be bought too dear, but the whole cost of these boroughs would not amount to the profits of one jobbing contract.

I HAVE now answered all the questions you have been pleased to propose, but I must mention another advantage which ought to recommend the measures you are pursuing to every friend to the internal peace and quiet of the kingdom; which is, that when the people have obtained a regular, legal, and speedy way of giving effect to their sentiments, there can no longer be any apprehension of their endeavouring to redress themselves by mobs and tumults; and even such regular and well conducted meetings as yours will become needless. I mention this circumstance with the more satisfaction as it stamps your conduct with the most unequivocal marks of disinterested patriotism. Power, when once acquired, is generally endeavour'd to be preserved by its possessors; but you, after having taken up yours from necessity, and employed it usefully, are now endeavouring with un-

exampled

exampl'd virtue to render its continuance unnecessary.

I FEAR I have been very long, but it was impossible for me to compress so much matter into a less compass, and when you wished to have my opinion I thought it best to give it fully, or at least as fully as I could in a letter. If it contains one thought that can be useful I shall be happy. I have only to assure the committee of the zeal I feel for the cause volunteers have undertaken, to the support of which I shall ever be ready to give every assistance in my power, and that it is with the highest respect and admiration for their conduct, that I have the honour to be their most obedient,

and most humble servant,

Aug. the
15th, 1783.

RICHMOND, &c.

To Lieut. Col. SHARMAN, &c.

SIR,

I AM informed by Mr. Joy, in a letter dated the first instant, that the committee of which you are chairman have done me the unmerited honour to desire that I would communicate to you my sentiments respecting a parliamentary reform.

EVER since the commencement of the last important movements in your kingdom, I have conceived the reformation of your house of commons as a measure,

ture, *essentially necessary* to the establishment of the liberties of Ireland upon a permanent foundation.

You have wisely reserved the consideration of this work to the present moment. If it be conducted with the same manly and determined spirit which has characterised your former exertions, there is no doubt but that, under the Providence of Heaven, you will secure to yourselves and your posterity a portion of national felicity,—of domestic peace,—of external honour, far transcending what have hitherto been exhibited, or enjoyed, in any age or clime.

THE matter before you may be considered with respect to the point of *expediency*, and the point of *right*.

WITH respect to the latter, my opinion is decided. By the constitution, a certain portion of the legislative power is reserved to the commons, who, from the circumstance of their numbers, are obliged to exercise their important function by delegation.

THIS power of delegation appears to me to be as extensive, as the obligation of bearing arms for the common defence; and I have long considered every restriction of the right of suffrage, as an infringement of the law of nature, as well as subversive of the constitution of my country.

I am of opinion also, that political truth and political expediency, are terms synonymous; and therefore am disposed to think that the only advice I could with propriety offer to a body of men who have conducted themselves with so much magnanimity, public spirit and moderation, is—GO ON, as you have begun; investigate the rights of freemen,—assert them,—establish them in their full extent.—I cannot believe that

that the accomplishment of any measure, founded in political truth, can be impossible to such exalted virtue.

HOWEVER as many expedients have been suggested, upon the idea that on account of prejudices, what is strictly right cannot be put in practice; it may not be improper to enquire how far these expedients are likely to answer the intended purpose.

It has been conceived, that the addition of a certain number of county members would assist in balancing the corrupt representation in the boroughs;—a measure, in my idea, as inexpedient as it is partial and unjust.

First, BECAUSE if it fail in effectually over-balancing the powers of corruption, it encreases the grievance, by enhancing the national expence; as a minister in such circumstances must employ more of the public treasure in gaining a majority than before. In lord North's opinion, such measure would have nothing in it formidable to an administration determined to govern by court influence. On the decision of the great debate on this question, he was heard to declare, that the friends of the proposed reform would have been worsted had the hundred knights been present; the majority on that day far exceeding that number.

Secondly. THE proposed addition would render the house of commons too numerous. In Ireland such an encrease of the county members as would be necessary to form an effectual balance to the borough-interest, would be greater in proportion than in England.

Thirdly. THE seats for counties would be disposed of absolutely at the pleasure of a few great landholders;

ers; while the great body of freeholders would enjoy less of the elective power than they do at present.

Lastly. THE expences of contested elections, especially in the larger counties, would be most enormously increased.

It has also been suggested, that it might be expedient to disfranchise some of the boroughs in those counties where they are most numerous, especially such whose constitution is most exceptionable; and to make compensation to the owners at the public expence.

NOTHING can be urged against this measure in my idea; so far as it goes, it is both equitable and expedient. The transferring of the right of election to townships or districts, which from the greater number of inhabitants and other circumstances appear more likely to preserve their independence, would be an improvement upon this idea.

THE generous principles you have adopted respecting Roman Catholics, have been attended with effects very different from what were expected by persons of less enlarged sentiment. There are few perhaps who would not be alarmed at the idea of conceding to them the power of electing representatives of their own persuasion. Very many perhaps would think it imprudent to allow them the exercise of the right of suffrage, were even their choice restricted to the persons of Protestants. Local difficulties must be best known to persons on the spot. I can only reason from general principles. If men are allowed to hold property, to possess rights, to bear arms, I cannot see any substantial reason why they should not also be allowed a share in the appointment of those who make the laws.

By

By such generous confidence, I should conceive their prejudices would be softened; and their attachment encreased to the public; of which they then would become a component part. At any rate, so far as regards Protestants, the right of suffrage may safely be extended far beyond its present limits.

SESSIONAL parliaments, (*i. e.* parliaments of a single session) are the only parliaments that can be deemed constitutional;—the nearer you approach to right and antient usage, the nearer will be your approach to the point of true political expedience.

WITH respect to the mode of effecting the reform in question, I own I feel strong objections to the idea of applying to the house of commons by petition.

If the present mode of delegation answers not the purpose of its institution, it is the proper office of the persons interested, (*i. e.* *the constituent body*) to form a plan for its amendment.

PERMIT me without imputation of presumption to hint my idea without reserve.

AFTER passing resolutions expressive of the right of the people to review the whole system of delegation, and declaratory of the principles upon which a true and proper representation ought to be constructed, let a committee from yourselves be appointed to draw the outline of a plan which you shall judge to be effectual; the most extensive and liberal that the times will bear; and propose it to the house of commons: at the same time specifying a certain period in which you conceive the wisdom of that house may finally complete the plan you shall offer to their consideration. Let your meeting be adjourned to a reasonable time beyond the period in which the plan may be con-

ceived to be offered for assent to the other branches of the legislature. The intervening conduct of parliament will suggest the proper measures to be adopted at such adjourned meeting.

PETITION implies a power in the house of commons to refuse your suit. It transfers the authority from the senders to the sent. It supposes in the majority of the house a dignity and independence, which the very nature of the petition proves they do not possess. It calls upon them to reform themselves; which a corrupt body of men never did, nor can do.

Thus with an undisguised heart, I have unfolded my idea upon this important subject. May consistency, public spirit and magnanimity, with true wisdom, continue to preside in your assemblies! — Though absent in person, yet ‘in spirit,’ and most fervent wishes for your success ‘I shall be present with you.’

I REMAIN with great respect for the committee and yourself,

your obedient servant,

Parliament-street, London,
13th Aug. 1783.

JOHN JEBB.

To the Same.

SIR,

IN the letter which I yesterday did myself the honour of addressing to you, I stated, in very general terms, my ideas respecting a reform in your representation, and the means of effecting it. In this I
pre-

propose to submit to your consideration, some unconnected observations in explanation or confirmation of the opinions I have already advanced, trusting that your respectable committee will receive with candour what I shall offer with integrity of purpose.

I AM very sensible that you have difficulties to struggle with peculiar to your country;—others which are common to both countries; but none, thank Heaven, which can be esteemed unsurmountable *when we reflect upon THE PAST.*

THE plan of universal representation, by a new arrangement into districts, each district electing one member, I own I think is by far the most practicable plan that can be proposed. The address of the delegates of the Ulster regiment asserts, that the right of being governed only by laws of his own making is the birth-right of man;—a proposition equally true, whether the terms of it be applied to nations, or the individuals of which they are composed.

CONTESTED elections generally arise from disputes concerning qualifications, which can never be stated in so definite a manner, where any degree of property is established as a requisite; without ministering matter for innumerable perjuries, and endless altercations.

IT is impossible to conceive that voters in general will put themselves to the expence and trouble of travelling from one side of an extensive county to the other to give their suffrage without some compensation. Laws to prevent bribery or corruption, in such circumstances, have always hitherto been evaded, and thus have encreased the evils they are intended to remedy. A law made to prevent the candidate from
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bearing the expences of an elector inhabiting the extremity of Yorkshire, to the place of election, will either be eluded or operate as a disfranchisement. The utmost exertion of human intellect cannot invent a method of taking the suffrages of an extensive county, which is not liable to strong objections. If you increase the number of county members, the difficulties are increased: a division of the larger counties into districts appears therefore necessary, whatever be the plan of reform you shall think proper to adopt with respect to the qualifications of the voters.

- If a less extensive plan than what has been hinted be adopted, it will be prudent to leave the matter open for posterity to improve upon it, if they judge proper. We know not what is really impracticable before trial. We have seen what Ireland has effected in less than four years. The objections to the plan of the duke of Richmond and major Cartwright, and the apprehensions which many entertain of danger, from admitting Roman Catholics to the entire rights of citizenship, may appear scarcely worthy of a moment's consideration at no very distant period.

UNANIMITY is certainly most desirable,—but there are two sorts of unanimity;—one which consists in blindly following the dictates of a few;—the other is the result of calm and dispassionate enquiry into the real relations of things. I allow on one side that it would be imprudent to aim at establishing more than what will meet with general concurrence: On the other, I maintain that many present prejudices may naturally be expected to give way, when a fair appeal is made to the understandings of men, and truth is held forth to public view by characters who justly possess the confidence of the people. The generous
sentiment

sentiments of the Ulster volunteers respecting religious toleration diffused themselves with rapidity inconceivable through the breasts of millions, and I trust that they will see their fair example followed by more than half the European world. I will only further observe upon this point that unless enough be done to render the true interest of the country predominant in the house of commons,—*nothing is done.*

It appears to me that you will lead the way in the great point of parliamentary reformation.—Next to yourselves Scotland appears most in earnest: It is therefore on many accounts that I wish you may be able to effect your purpose. Your success will greatly facilitate the establishment of a similar reform in this kingdom. I trust that our committees will emulate your generosity and candour, and by inviting and cultivating a free and open correspondence avail themselves of whatever light the friends of liberty in Scotland and Ireland may be able to suggest. I have sent inclosed two of your own addresses, with a resolution of our society for constitutional information at the head of them.—May the spirit they breathe contribute towards the rekindling of that flame of liberty, which once was wont to burn with so bright a flame in the breasts of Englishmen!

I HAVE also taken the liberty to inclose the report of the Westminster sub-committee respecting an annual, equal and universal representation of the commons of England,—my own address to the freeholders of Middlesex, and some other tracts, which state with better arguments than I can urge, the objections to the less extensive plans that have been proposed in this kingdom. Among these the letter of Mr. Batley to the Revd. Mr. Wyvill, respecting the inexpediency of
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adding an hundred county members, appears well worthy of perusal.

I ATTENDED closely to the debates of your parliament when Mr. Grattan and Mr. Yelverton first proposed their motions in the house of commons. I saw the force of influence, and I despaired.—The volunteer spirit arose, and Ireland was emancipated from its chains! A new parliament may contain a greater number of real friends to freedom; but an incurable vice is inherent in its constitution. If it be left to parliament to form a plan, the scheme will infallibly be defeated. The aristocratick interest united, with the regal, like a blight from the east, will assuredly blast every hope of harvest. While you retain the matter in your own hands you cannot fail of effecting, under providence, the permanent salvation of your country. At the ensuing meeting it may be agreed how far the exercise of the right of suffrage should extend;—a general outline of a plan may be drawn for a division of the counties into districts,—the disfranchisement of some boroughs, and the transferring the right of electing members to more populous townships may be proposed; and the most material regulations respecting the taking of the suffrages of the electors pointed out. At an adjourned meeting you will be able to judge how far parliament has complied with the wishes of the people. The resolves and instructions of your constituents will give sufficient weight and authority to your proceedings at such a period.

ONCE more requesting your favourable indulgence, and with my heartiest good wishes for the success of a measure in the event of which the cause of public virtue,

virtue, of civil and religious liberty is so deeply interested, I remain your obedient servant,

Brighthelmston,
14th Aug. 1783.

JOHN JEBB.

To Lieut. Col. SHARMAN, &c.

S I R,

I HAVE received a letter signed by the Secretary of 45 corps of Volunteers of Ulster, desiring my opinion concerning a reform of the representation of the commons in parliament, may be transmitted to you for the information of the committee appointed by the delegates of those respectable bodies.

FROM the first moment of that question's being agitated in England, I have invariably held one opinion, as to the *right of representation* in theory, as founded on one plain proposition, viz. to be free is to be self-governed, and vice versâ. Therefore every man must either vote in person or by his representative, in making those laws which are to affect his life, liberty, and property.

I AM very ready to admit however, the possibility of our being obliged to relinquish in practice, what seems perfect in theory; and on that account, I have joined in some associations here, for a reformation which I think far from complete, but the best plan in which a sufficient number of persons were ready to join, so as to give us any prospect of success.

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IN the eight queries contained in the letter to me, there are some which depend on local circumstances, which I am not sufficiently acquainted with to be able to give so direct and explicit an answer as I could wish; I therefore think it is best to give you a brief account of the plan I wish to see adopted in England, and afterwards to enclose you a separate paper containing each query, and the best answer to it which I find myself prepared to give.

MY favourite plan for this country, to secure a representation tolerably equal, and to make as little alteration in the present mode, as our security will admit, is as follows:

LET the counties and cities remain just as they are at present.

LET the counties be divided into four or more classes, according to their importance in the national scale, considering their population, agriculture, and manufactures.

LET each return from four to ten or twelve burghesses, making in the whole the same number of members as at present.

LET every man paying scot and lot, have a vote for burghesses.

LET the poll be taken on a certain day in every parish, before the parish-officers and principal inhabitants.

LET the constable witness the poll, and attend the sheriff on a certain day, who, assisted by such magistrates as may chuse to attend, is to cast up the same, and make the return.

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THE foregoing seems to me to be clear of all objection, as it disfranchises nobody; but only restores to liberty such as are now unjustly disfranchised: and as it takes no man out of his parish, removes the only plausible objection to frequent elections.

I am with great regard,
Sir,
your most obedient
humble servant,

Aug. 18th,
1783.

E F F I N G H A M.

P. S. I beg to observe that no argument has ever yet been produced in favour of a seven years parliament, which is not equally good for one of seventeen years.

SEPARATE ANSWERS, &c.

Answer to first Query.

I WOULD *disfranchise* nobody, but I would communicate to all those who are *at present unjustly disfranchised*, a participation of liberty with the rest of their country. By consolidating the boroughs, and all other householders, every man would be represented by *at least four* members.

Answer to Query 2d. The number of members I take to be a matter of indifference, provided they are amply sufficient to attend to all the *local business*, and not too many to sit and debate in one chamber. If any *corrupt connexion* is apprehended between the

representative body and the crown, it is the short duration of parliaments and not the number of members that must prevent or cure that evil.

Answer to 3d Query. The objection alluded to is, that as now two great families endeavour to return the two county members, the same would be done by six families were there six members. I should think it probable in such a case, that the two most powerful of those families would return four of the members, and the four families next in power would compromise for two; and thus the six united would totally throw out those unconnected with them. This consideration would determine me to leave the county representation untouched.

Answer to 4th Query. I think every man, not incapable thro' infancy, insanity, or criminal conduct, has a right to the franchise of being represented; but I cannot entertain a moment's doubt, in respect of those who bear the public burthens.

Answer to 5th Query. I rather think it would not be wise to have the members returned by ballot: but as I must candidly own, some of the best men in this country are of a different opinion, I will briefly give you the reason for mine. I had an opportunity some years ago, of learning how a ballot might be as easily abused as any other method of voting, and it was upon the following occasion. The kingdom of Sweden, it is well known, has in the present century enjoyed about fifty years of a free government; during which time, they collected the votes in their diet by ballot. When a member was bribed, whose promise the briber did not chuse to rely on, it was the custom for him to write on the same paper with his vote, some word or sentence agreed on; by which it was known

known whether he had earned his wages or not. To prevent this, a law was made, that if any such mark appeared in future, the vote should be null and void.

IN the year 1769, I was witness of a strong contest for the choice of a land marshal ; when among other exertions of each party, bribery and corruption were not forgot : but as the law above-mentioned prevented the old method, they took the following : instead of desiring any one to vote for the favourite candidate, each manager applied to the supposed friends of the opposite side, and gave them money to destroy their own vote : by which, tho' they could not encrease their own numbers, they could diminish the number of their adversaries. It is easy to conceive numberless other contrivances which, *till known*, will serve to evade any regulation that can be made.

BUT I have a much stronger reason against ballots. It is not merely *influence*, but *secret influence*, that I dread. For so long as riches or power, can confer any favours or benefits ; and so long as good men shall possess gratitude ; knaves, avarice ; or fools, pride : so long influence will exist. But while that is brought to light by open voting in the face of our country, it appears to me in a less formidable light, than if it worked in the dark, where I could neither see the nature or extent of my danger.

Answer to 6th Query. I think a triennial parliament the longest that can be any ways consistent with the idea of any controul in the constituent over his representative. Indeed any fixed duration beyond the session to which parliament is called by the King's writ, is granting an independence to the representative for that term, and so far making that branch of the legislature an *aristocratic body*.

Answer

Answer to 7th Query As I cannot suppose it possible that any gentleman has either procured his own return with a view to sell his vote, or taken money to procure the return of another man, I am at a loss to account for a pecuniary claim in *amende* for a property in the lives and liberty of a people who call themselves so free, that they assert a negro slave does ipso facto obtain his liberty by setting his foot among them. If, however, by any former mistaken notions, such a thing should have happened; if any gentleman has really given a few thousands more than the true value of an estate, on account of a supposed privilege annexed to it; or if a poor member of a corporation would by the proposed reform, really believe that he was unjustly deprived of an octennial twenty pounds, I should think that equity might at the intercession of liberality, so far relax the severity of her rules as to permit a sufficient sum to be distributed in *secret service money* to prevent the general joy from being interrupted by any murmurs of sorrow or discontent.

Answer to 8th Query. In all the foregoing questions I have considered what I wished to be established here, as equally applicable to Ireland; and have reserved to this place my observations on the only very material difference which strikes me in the situation of the two countries as to their representation. The very extensive line I draw for this country may appear dangerous in Ireland, on account of the great proportion of Roman Catholics in that kingdom, and renders it necessary for me here to make a short observation on that subject. A Papist is not dangerous because he prays to saints, but because he sets up a foreign jurisdiction, paramount to our laws. I will never fight with my fellow-citizen, because

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We cannot agree whether a wench in a white sheet, be a sacrament or a ceremony ; I will only, as a good christian ought, pray to God to pardon him all his errors, and me all mine. But if he will go about to overturn the protestant succession, or any other security for the liberties of my country, I will, as it is my duty, oppose him to the last drop of my blood. On these principles we have in England, very justly, as I think, relaxed in the severity of our penal laws ; and I hope the day is not far distant, when bigotry shall have given way to common sense, and our religious opinions be all reconciled to one plain truth, that to outrage the first laws of nature and reason cannot be to serve God.

How far the situation of Ireland in this respect may, or may not warrant, what we have done can only be determined by those who have the opportunity of knowing the numbers and the inclinations of the Roman Catholics ; how far the influence of their clergy operates upon them ; what security they have given or will give for maintaining the constitution. On these circumstances must depend the answer to the first part of this question. As to the second part of it, viz. " the steps to be taken," none appear to me more eligible than those we have adopted by county committees of correspondence, to endeavour to fix on the principal points.

If the friends of reform then move parliament to consider of the present state of representation, it will appear to every man so unequal, that there can remain no doubt but that the justice and propriety, I may add *the necessity* of a reform, will be obvious, and consequently with general consent adopted. The mode of reform coming from parliament, will give satis-

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satisfaction to those who (having in some points differed from other committees, and thinking their opinions equally fit to be followed,) will readily submit to such authority.

If I have not given so exactly as I desired my ideas upon a subject I have so much at heart, I hope you will attribute it to my want of ability, and not to any want of inclination to convince you of the truth with which

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

your most obedient, and

humble servant,

Peckham,

E F F I N G H A M.

To WILLIAM SHARMAN, *Esq; &c. &c.*

S I R,

AS an anxious friend to the cause of a parliamentary reform, in which both Ireland and England are equally interested, I trust you will excuse the freedom I use in addressing you on this occasion. I cannot doubt but that the principles of the constitution, and that the means necessary to restore freedom to the people, as well as purity to parliament, are well known to the gentlemen who in Ireland have taken a leading part in this great work: but yet, as amongst others of their countrymen, that knowledge may not be so generally diffused as might be wished, and as
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the humblest essays in that line may be of some use, I have taken the liberty to order some copies of different tracts which have employed my pen to be directed to you at Lisburn, for the disposal of the committee of correspondence over which you preside; the acceptance of which on their part I should esteem a particular honour.

IN those writings, I have thought it my duty to adhere inflexibly to what appeared to me to be the rights of men; and much thought has convinced me, that, in proportion as those rights shall be departed from, the reform itself will not only be clogged with difficulties and inconsistencies in the execution, but that, when accomplished, it will proportionally fail in its proposed effects. I confess that in England we have not yet had at any period a prospect of effecting a complete reform; but in Ireland, your volunteer army—the most glorious production of public virtue that ever adorned a nation!—have perfection or imperfection wholly in their option. The conduct of that army has hitherto manifested too much wisdom and too much patriotism to leave it doubtful which choice it will make. It would ill suit with the splendour of what is past, that a reform in the parliament of Ireland should bear marks of material defectiveness. Such an event would greatly lessen that dignity of character to which she hath attained, and which I trust she means to transmit to latest posterity, by henceforth securing equal justice to her citizens, and to her parliament that purity which alone can insure the permanency of her freedom and her glory.

A CLOSE adherence to the general principles of freedom would introduce into her elections, as well as into the frame of her representative body, that

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which surpasses all human inventions for guarding against the insinuating properties of corruption: I mean, simplicity. In providing for the purity of a parliament, every thing depends on the elections; and the freedom of elections rests on these two pillars:—1st, the multitude of electors; and 2dly, the short duration of power. These two principles necessarily conduct us to universality of suffrage and parliaments of a single session: and so sacred, in my humble opinion, are these rights, that on no account or pretence whatever can they become the subject of voluntary concession. It is time enough to accept of any thing short of these rights, when attainment is impossible or the contest not attended with any hope of success. These, however, are cases which the magnanimity of Ireland has not left applicable to her. How, then, can she act as though they were? She cannot. Her honour demands of her a complete enfranchisement. A free state without free citizens, is a solecism in terms. But it is worse than a solecism. It is folly; it is corruption; it is misery; it is disgrace. It is freedom to vice, and chains to virtue.

WHAT has occurred to me as expedient to add to the essentials above noticed, will be seen at large in the several details of which I have treated in the barrier; but as one of those expedients appears to me to merit a distinguished preference to the rest, I will trespass a moment longer on your time to say a few words upon it. The ballot is that to which I allude. It has its enemies. Their arguments certainly deserve attention. I have heard, I believe, the most forcible; and with much truth can say that I considered them with the utmost impartiality. At one time, indeed, I was prepared to renounce the idea as publicly as I had before expressed myself in its favour. I returned
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however to my original opinion, and with additional decision of mind. To this latter change of sentiment, conversations with Mr. Laurens not a little contributed. From him I learnt that in South Carolina, the ballot in their elections was introduced about forty years ago; that its good effects were immediately observable; that it was ever afterwards considered as a wise measure; and that it was thought to have been particularly serviceable during the most critical periods of the late revolution in that country. These proofs of its happy effects, instantly outweighed all that I had heard advanced, of its tendency to abate the virtue and courage necessary to freedom. I have since been farther confirmed in my favourable opinion of the ballot, by numerous conversations with tenants and tradesmen; who, for the most part, have laid even as much stress upon this security as upon the other two; nay more.

WITH respect to the universality of suffrage, it may perhaps be observed that the states of America, in their new constitutions, have thought fit to require qualifications. But although I reverence the wisdom so conspicuous in those constitutions, I cannot however admire any rules in practice, which contradict the noblest and clearest of their political reasonings, and which needlessly violate the eternal principles of truth and justice. In sterling money, some of their qualifications are not equal to ten shillings a year. So trifling an exclusion is the very nonsense of inveterate prejudice.

SINCE there can be no union between two countries on terms of entire equality, and for a common interest, unless both those countries are equally free, I trust that the friends of the constitution in both

Ireland and England will hold a regular intercourse and consider a reform in their respective legislatures as a common cause. I hope too, they will each have their society for constitutional information, and that those societies will correspond and co-operate in their generous labours.

WITH that high respect which is due to one who is chosen to preside where all are great, and with my warmest prayers to the author of all good, that he may give you success in your efforts to establish his laws of human government,

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

your Well-wisher,

*Marnham, near Tux-
ford, Nottingham-
shire, Aug. 26, 1783.*

JOHN CARTRIGHT,

To

To the Same.

SIR,

SINCE I did myself the honour to write to you on the 26th of this month, the news-papers intimate that Dublin will instruct her Representatives to make the following points the objects of their exertions, viz.

1. A bill of rights.
2. An annual meeting of the Irish Parliament.
3. An equalization of duties on merchandise, &c.
4. A tax on absentees, &c.
5. A dereliction of the late French duties, &c.
6. The abrogation of the British Admiralty-court and Post-office, &c.

BEING sorry to observe the attention of *any* Irish patriots directed to so many objects, I have presumed once more to trouble you with my thoughts. Although to the well-informed they may be unnecessary, yet, possibly, to others the sentiments of one wholly unconnected with Ireland, and who has no other motive in the offer than what is inspired by a warm attachment to the cause of freedom, may not be altogether useless; especially when put in the same scale with the advice of those to whom they look up for fully and finally settling their constitution.

THAT the gentlemen who promoted the Dunganon meeting have held forth to their countrymen only ONE OBJECT, is a proof of the soundest wisdom. That attained; what else is wanting? It includes all that citizens can wish. But to call for a bill of rights, equalization of duties, and laws of wholesome policy,

cy, *before* you have a constitutional representation, is to demand the fruits of liberty *before* you have planted the tree. The tree once planted, *these, and numberless other blessings*, will be its spontaneous produce. To extort from the fears of an unconstitutional Parliament, beneficial laws and useful declarations; were to waste that time in which a constitutional Parliament itself might be obtained. That alone is the present business of Ireland. Not a thought ought she to bestow upon any other object. To magnify the importance of inferior things, and if possible to divide the public attention, seem to be the only sources of hope left to the enemies of your freedom. In God's name, then, let the sagacity of Ireland keep pace with her virtue and her courage!

THE advantages of adhering to the one object of the Dungannon Meeting, will be greater than can be expressed. Your force directed to *one point* will produce celerity; will prove irresistible. A handful of enterprising men of address may make their way in any direction through even millions intent on a diversity of pursuits leading them different ways; but what can penetrate or impede those millions, when condensed to solidity, by unity of object and unity of movement!

IN using the word *celerity*, I have not meant to recommend any thing hasty in the proceedings of Ireland. Hastiness is only for those who, through want of public virtue and well-ordered power, are obliged to snatch in a propitious moment at any necessary good. It is not so with Ireland. On the first of all earthly concerns, she may deliberate as becomes the importance of the occasion, and the dignity of human nature. Her counsels may be the counsels of men, as free from fear as from a love of servitude.

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INDIVIDUAL Irishmen may bring forward motions for the annual *sittings* of a parliament, or for a *more* equal representation of the people ; but the ripened judgment of the community will require annual *elections*, as well as a representation *equal* and *universal* : In short, a constitutional Parliament ; FOR NONE ELSE DESERVES THE NAME.

BEFORE I conclude, give me leave to say, that, notwithstanding the apparent forgetfulness in this country at the present moment, of that parliamentary reform which, in many parts of it, was of late so ardently sought, I feel a strong persuasion that she will not be deaf to the patriot voice of her sister Ireland. In my opinion, they are equally interested in each other's prosperity ; in each other's freedom. An enslaved nation in the hands of any government, is an engine of tyranny too dangerous to a free people under the same government, to be an object of indifference. As there could be no security for the freedom of Great Britain, were Ireland completely enslaved ; so neither could there be any safety for the freedom of Ireland, although ever so well established within, while Great Britain should be without liberty. By means of a corrupt Legislature, faction might send its armies across the Irish Channel as it did across the Atlantic.

WITH the greatest respect, I have the honour to subscribe myself,

Sir,

your well-wisher,

Marnham, near
Tuxford.

JOHN CARTWRIGHT.



